

- The biggest complaint about the church from many people around the world, unfortunately, is they would say that the church is full of a bunch of narrow minded, judgemental, hypocrites. We are in a mess of series called doubting God. And sadly, there are many people who doubt God, because there are Christians who claim one thing and they live another. Have you ever noticed that?

- [Speaker One] Yeah.

- There are people who say, Hey, this is what we're about, but then the way they live, they do something entirely different. And this can honestly be very, very confusing. You may have seen it somewhere in your own life. You might have a classmate that posts Bible verses nonstop on Instagram during the week, and then parties her little brain out on the weekend, and you say that's a little bit confusing. Or you might have worked for a boss that talked all about Jesus in the business and then treated the employees with disrespect and that can be confusing. Or it might have been a dad that corrected his daughter for dressing immodestly and they found out later the dad had a porn problem and that's confusing. Or sadly, it might be a pastor that you admired and you looked up to, and you found out the pastor wasn't living the life that the pastor was claiming to live. And that can be very confusing. Is a little bit like a gym that I read about, why do you go to the gym? You go to the gym to get in shape, right? I read about a gym that has free pizza Friday. That's confusing to me honestly, it's confusing. I guess some hope is alive. People here today, they're celebrating sobriety and they're really excited about sobriety. It would be a little bit like going to an AA meeting and having margarita Monday or tequila Tuesday when whiskey sour Wednesday stopped back ago and all week long. I've been there before. It's a little bit confusing when people claim one thing and then they end up doing something else. And sometimes a world that would like to believe in God, looks on it the people of God and says you claim one thing, you do something different and that's confusing. And tragically, when some people think of the church today, they think of scandals, they think of abuse, corruption, hypocrisy, judgment, and hate. And people look on and scratch their head confused and say if Jesus came full of grace and truth, Why do so many Christians seem to be full of hate and lies? In fact, there's a piercing quote by an author named Brennan Manning, and he wrote this. He said, the single greatest cause of atheism in the world is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. This is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable. And that's why the title of today's message is, when Christians let you down. Let's all pray. Father, We ask that in your presence and by the power of your living word, that your holy spirit would help heal those who are hurting. Give me wisdom, God to teach your word in a consistent manner with your heart, that lives would be changed and Jesus would be glorified. We prayed this in his name and everybody who agree says?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Amen. If you've ever been confused and maybe hurt, disappointed or disillusioned by Christians that don't live like Jesus, you're not alone. Jesus didn't like it when people claimed one thing and lived another. In fact, when you look at the gospels, Jesus never spoke more harshly about anyone or anything than he did those that he called hypocrites. In fact, in Matthew chapter 23, there's what theologians call the seven woe's. Seven different times Jesus said, woe, to those who are claiming one thing and living something else. This is what he said in verse 27. He said, what sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Then he calls him hypocrites. Now watch

what he says, for you are like whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside, but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. You're putting on a good show, but on the inside, you're filthy, and you're so far from God. He's an outwardly, you look like righteous people, but inwardly, your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness. 17 different times in the Bible, you'll see the word hypocrite. Every time you see the word hypocrite, Jesus used the word hypocrite. And every time Jesus used the word hypocrite, he was correcting those who claimed one thing and lived another. Interestingly enough, Jesus was the first person to use the word hypocrite in this context. Originally, this was a word that you would've thought of in the Greek actors society, where the actors would be called hippocrates, which was they put on a mask and they would act like one character. And they put on a different mask to act like another. And this was the first time that anyone to our knowledge use the word hypocrite outside of the context of the theater. And Jesus was saying, Hey, when you're giving to be seen, you're a hypocrite. Whenever you're fasting to impress, look how holy I am, you're a hypocrite. When you're praying to be heard, you're a hypocrite. When you're acting like you're generous, and yet you're taking advantage of the poor. He said, you're a play actor, you're a hypocrite. And Jesus had zero tolerance for hypocrites. What's interesting is you'll notice he wasn't calling out their sin, he wasn't calling out their sin. What he was calling out was their show.

- [Congregation] That's right. He didn't say woe to you who curse on the golf course, when you slice one off the fairway. He didn't say, woe to those of you who watch really bad shows on Netflix every day of your life. He said woe to you who are hypocrites, woe to you that do the wrong things, but act like you don't. And in Matthew 23 verse 33, Jesus called the hypocrite this. He said, you snakes, you brood of Vipers, how will you escape being condemned to hell? Jesus, why don't you tell us how you really feel about this? If you've ever been frustrated by those who claim one thing and live something else, Jesus was frustrated by it too. It kind of raises the question. Why do so many Christians get it wrong? If we really hope to represent Jesus in the church, why is it that sometimes we do a good job, and other times we fail miserably. And I wanna look today at three different reasons why so-called Christians could get it wrong. And then we'll look to some teaching to see if we can find healing. Why do so-called Christians occasionally or off and get it wrong? Number one, we need to recognize this, that some people who claim Christ, aren't really Christians. There are some people who go to church and may call themselves a Christian, but they really are not born of the spirit of God. They've never been transformed by Jesus. They may be a church member, they may carry a Bible, they may claim one thing, but they've never been converted, forgiven and transformed by the power of Jesus. In fact, Titus 1:16 says, there are some that claim to know God, but by their actions, they deny him. In other words, we need to understand that going to church doesn't make you a Christian, following Jesus does. Claiming God or going to a Bible study doesn't make you a Christian, following Jesus does. Even believing in God Doesn't it make you a Christian, but following Jesus does. Why is it sometimes the so-called Christians let us down hurt us, betray us, do things that are really, really horrible and disheartening? Is because some of them aren't Christians. To give you an example, my family in high school, we moved to a small town in Southern Oklahoma. And there was a very well respected teacher in the community who also taught in Sunday school, and people looked up to this ma'am and admired this man. And in the sixth grade, this man started abusing my sister. We found out later on along with many others and sexually abused her in a horrific way for years. And for by posture, I can't judge where the guy stood with God, but he may have claimed him and his actions denied him. And tragically, there are some who claim Christ, but they simply

do not know him. And that's why we often hurt because of what they do. Why is it that sometimes so-called Christians fall short? Well, some of 'em claim Christ, but they are not really walking with and following Jesus. There's a second reason. And that is this. Some are Christians, but they're not mature. They're Christians, but they're still young in their spiritual development. We could say they're baby Christians. They haven't learned everything yet. And the author to the Hebrews describes them this way in the fifth chapter versus 13 and 14. For someone who lives on milk is still an infant. In other words, they're a baby Christian and doesn't know how to do what's right. Solid food, is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. Why is it that some Christians do say the wrong thing or act in the wrong way or betray your trust or morally do something that's confusing? It's because they actually are born into the kingdom of God, but they're still developing in their faith. They're still immature and they're still growing. I'll give you a very embarrassing example. But in college I was building my testimony for a few years. Do any of, you know what I'm talking about?

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- Yes. So someone was like building, you maybe still be building your testimony, you're so excited. And I was living in a way that was really far from God. And so was my buddy who was, maybe is wild or Wilder than I was. And one week unbeknownst to him, I knelt down and prayed God, if you're there, I didn't even know how to really pray. If you're there, just show me, I'll give you my life. And he came back after being somewhere else, unbeknownst to me and had a similar experience. And when he came in said, I don't know how to tell you this, and I don't really like my words today, but I said, I think I've decided I'm religious. That's just kind of all what I said. And he goes no F way. That's what he said, because he didn't know any better. And he said, me too. I was like, that's amazing. And so to celebrate, we went out and got wasted. That's what we did, now for those of you that choose to follow Jesus today, I'm recommending a life group or baptism as your next step. Not margarita Monday with 19 margaritas. Okay? I'm not recommending you do that. But I was a brand new follower of Jesus. I didn't know any better. I was still maturing. I didn't know what was right. I didn't know what was wrong. And it is really still no excuse to say, why did they do something that was so hurtful? But there is an understanding and explanation. There are some people that are still developing in their faith.

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- Why is it that sometimes we find ourselves disappointed and let down, or even tragically hurt by those who call themselves Christians? Well, some of 'em aren't really Christians. Some of them, they are Christians, but they they're still maturing. And number three, some are Christians in maturing and they still mess up. They still fall into sin. They're still tempted by a very sly and slippery spiritual enemy that still can wage attack against the mature and faithful followers of Jesus. And when they do mess up like this, this doesn't necessarily mean they're a hell bound hypocrite. They may love Jesus, and in a moment of peer pressure, tell a lie. They may genuinely love Jesus and speak harshly when their flesh rises up. They may love Jesus and be in a bad spot in their marriage and give to temptation and betray their marital vows. And it's a heartbreaker and there is no excuse. But the explanation is that sometimes even the most faithful give in temptation, are deceived and step off of the path and end up hurting others. And I'm gonna tell you right now, no matter how mature you are, you're

still vulnerable. And the moment you think you're not, you're even more vulnerable. Be careful when you think you're not vulnerable to temptation because pride often comes before a fall. Here's the problem though. We're all gonna let each other down at times. And the problem is whenever we fall short, you know what we do? We blame our circumstances. If I do something that's not acceptable, I'm like, Hey, you know me? You know, I didn't mean that, it wasn't that big of a deal. I was just tired. I was just under pressure. I mean, you know my heart, don't you? You know, I'm not that kind of person. I mean, come on, Hey, it was a bad day. It was a bad week. It's not that big of a deal. I mean, you've done things too. If I fall short, I blame my circumstances. But the challenge is when someone else falls short, we tend to blame their character. Oh, they're the bad ones, oh, you're the wrong one, oh, you're the hypocrites. And when we blame our circumstances in someone else's character, isn't that hypocrisy in our own lives? Oh, you think I'm stepping on your toes now, just get ready, 'cause it's gonna get worse. You better just hide your toes up under those chairs wherever you are. Why is it that when we sin, God, doesn't just like fall off the throne. Oh, I don't think they do that. I can't believe they did that. I can't believe they did... God isn't shocked, because he knows that we're prone to sin, that we are born with the sin nature. He knows that when we do mess up it's because we are sinners in need of redemption. In fact scripture says this in Psalm 103 verse 14, what God knows. God knows what? How weak we are. We give into peer pressure. We give into temptation. We're vulnerable. We want to be liked. We tend to take the easy way out. He knows how weak we are. And he remembers we are only dust. Would you look at the person sitting next to you and say, you're just dust. Just tell him right now. You're only dust. Tell him you're only dust. In fact, if you wanna make it really, really funny you're ready for this. The new American standard version translates it this way. It says we are, butt dust. And you have to say it, right? Because if you say it this way, we are butt dust. It totally changes the meaning. Look at the other person, your second favorite neighbor and tell him you're butt dust. Just tell him that right now, you ain't nothing butt dust, you're butt dust. Tell him that, you're butt dust. You butt dust. This is in the Bible. We're dust. Some of you, your butt dust. And that means sometimes we're weak. And sometimes we say the wrong things. And sometimes, unfortunately we hurt people. And so when you find yourself hurt by Christians, maybe your expectations were too high. Maybe you were just expecting something out of someone that's never gonna always be like Jesus. And so I just want to tell you right now when I do something that lets you down. For example, some of you are leaving the church because I said, butt dust, I say something sarcastic, or I say something that's inappropriate or something you theologically disagree with or whatever. Just remember, I'm a bag of dirt. That's what I am. I'm dust. And so are you, you had nothing but some potting soil. That's what you are.

- [Speaker] Yeah.

- That's what you are. You just go in there, sit there, looking all church pretty with your makeup on and your best shoes and your little Instagram hashtag thing. You're still your filters, you're still potting soil. That's what you are. You came from dust, you go back to dust. We were born with the sin nature, redeemed by Jesus, but still capable of sin. And this is the first time in the history of church. anybody's clapped when I said you're capable of sin, but we are. We are. In fact in Acts chapter 13, there's a really powerful story about Paul and Barnabas. And I wanna show you this story Acts 13:49 says the word of the Lord spread through the whole region. So God's moving. Good things are happening. The word Lord is spreading, but what happened to Jewish leader who incited inside. I wanna want you to notice who they incited. The God fearing women of

high standing. These were the prayer warrior ladies. These were the faithful women of God. These leaders inside of the God fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. These were the ones everybody respected. And what did they do? They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their region. Good charged people, got led astray and hurt Paul and Barnabas. So you know what Paul and Barnabas did? They quit church. They left Christianity. They called everybody a bunch of hypocrites. They didn't do that. They could have. And they would have, if they had focused on the offense. But in their mind, I can't tell you for sure what they said to themselves. But every time I've been hurt by those who claim Christ. I tell myself this, I tell myself that the church didn't let me down a person let me down. The church didn't betray me, a couple of people betrayed me. I tell myself, God didn't let me down, a big old bag of dirt let me down. And so the logic goes like this and I understand it. They hurt me. I can't trust the church. So I'm not gonna go to church anymore. We do that with church. We don't do it with restaurants. Right?

- [Speaker] Yeah.

- I had bad service, so I'm never gonna eat again. Took 15 minutes to get my burger the fries weren't good. I'm never gonna eat again. We don't do that. We go back because there's food in the house. And when people let us down, we go back, 'cause there's spiritual food in the house. And we worship God in the house. Paul and Barnabas of us decided this. They decided we're not gonna let the sins of people keep us from the goodness of God. We're not gonna know what they did. Draw us away from the grace, the love, the power of God. who let Him down? Some dust. And watch what they did. Scripture said, the very next verse says this. So what they do? So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to to Iconium and the disciples were filled with joy and the holy spirit. What do they do? They shook the dust off their feet and they went on and they were full of joy and the holy spirit. I don't know who this is for, but somebody you've been hurt and at some point, and I don't wanna minimize your hurt because I know there's deep hurt. At some point you gotta shake it off. You gotta shake it off. And some again, I don't wanna *minimize it. Meaning he touched me. She lied to me. They abused me. That takes a lot of shaken and a lot of praying and maybe some counseling and some more shaking and some more praying and maybe some more counseling and maybe some more introspection and maybe some more humbling yourself and more asking God to help you. But at some point you gotta shake it off, and when you shake it off and when you let it go and when you start healing, you go on full of joy and full of the holy spirit. I don't know anybody full of joy, who still carries a grudge. Even if they're not sorry. sometimes you gotta shake it off. Sometimes you gotta shake it off and I'm not telling you it is easy, I gotta shake things off a couple times a week, and about once a month, I gotta shake something big off. I've been doing it for years. There's a verse in the Bible that says where two or three gather together in my name one of 'em mean. It's not really there, but it's kind of true. Not just in the church, it's wherever you go. Anywhere you go, everywhere you go. Anywhere you go, people are people, people let you down. And so, the biggest complaint about the church from some people is full of a bunch of narrow-minded judgmental, hypocrites. And so I just wanna say from the bottom of my heart, if you've been hurt in the church, If you've been hurt by a Christian, If you have disdain for the hypocrisy inside the church, I apologize, because we have not always gotten it, right. We haven't. We in the church sometimes say one thing and then do something different. As much as I don't wanna admit it, it is dead untrue. Some Christians, some church leaders have abused their power and hurt people. Sometimes Christians can be arrogant, we can be harsh,

we can be unkind we can be unloving and it's not right. There's nothing right about, it's not God honor, it's not what Jesus wants and I'm sorry. Sincerely, sorry. I'm sorry when we don't get it right. I'm sorry when I don't get it right. The reality is all of us have been heard by hypocrites. And if you're honest enough, you'll have to recognize. And let me just say it you've been a hypocrite too. You've been hypocrite too. None of us are perfect. The only thing I can promise you is, as much as I don't want to at some point, I'll let you down. I'll say something you disagree with. I'll lose my temper, I'll slip into a moment of pride, I'll be critical of somebody else. I'll be more focused on being right than being loving. And when I am that way, I will repent before God, and I will apologize. As I have two different times in the last week. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I should have done better. Will you forgive me? And two Christians looked on and said course as Jesus has forgiven me, so I forgive you. And that's the beauty of the body of Christ. So I just wanna say this and I don't want this to be, I don't want this to come across as unkind, but I wanna say it. If you've lost faith in Jesus, because of people, maybe your faith is in people when it should be in Jesus. If you're doubting God, because of what someone else did, I just say, look to Jesus, cause he never let you down. Look at how he lived. Look at how he loved. Look at how he confronted the hypocrisy. Look at how he would confront it in us. How he lovingly corrects us and convicts us and changes us. Look at what he did in the gospels. If anyone in power would abuse their power, Jesus would correct them and defend the oppressed, the widows and the poor. When church people might snub their nose at those who are different, people who are nothing like Jesus, they liked Jesus. They liked him, because he loved the sinners and the broken and the prostitutes and the outcast. He loved them where they were, but he didn't leave them where they were. When someone was caught in sin and everybody else wanted to stone him, kill her, kill her, kill her. He just ran. 'em off, looked down and said, Honey, where are your accusers? She said, they're all gone. He said, then I don't condemn you. Now go, don't do it anymore. Go your way and sin no more. The love of a savior. When people accuse Christians of being narrow and judgmental, just remember everywhere that Jesus went, he showed compassion for the least for the last and for the lost.

- [Speaker] Yeah. If you've ever been hurt by hypocrisy, Jesus, he has zero tolerance for hypocrisy. But he has unlimited grace for a sinner in need of forgiveness. He continues to love. He continues to heal. He continues to offer hope, that's how good he is. And so, when we get it wrong and we will, I'm sorry, please forgive me a bag of dirt. We're not perfect, but we're striving to be perfected by one who lives inside of us. We're not gonna make excuses, we're gonna continue to be conformed, to reflect the goodness of Jesus. The man that abused my sister and others, never apologized, claimed Christ his whole life. And our family together decided, to forgive him. It took a lot of years. It took a lot of shaking. It took a lot of counseling. It took a lot of praying. He's a box of dirt. Sometimes you gotta shake the dirt off. And we wrote him a note explaining to him why we will forgive him and presented the gospel to him. And his nurse read it to him on his death bed when he was dying. And I understand from her that she was very moved and he was very moved and they prayed together. And I don't know what happened to him in that moment, but what I know happened to us. Is we let it go, we let it go.

- [Speaker] Yes.

- Because Jesus has zero tolerance for hypocrisy, but he's got unlimited grace for a sinner in need of repentance. And I can't speak for you, but I wanna offer the same grace to others that was given to me. And if you let me down or if I let you down, what do we do? We do what spirit-filled believers do? We repent. We apologize. We show

back up in the house and the world looks on and doesn't say, they're a hypocrites , but the world says, wow, they're different. And they will know that we are disciples, not by our theology, not by our buildings, not by our worship style, not by our sermons. They'll know that we are disciples of Jesus by how we love one, another. One of the most powerful ways you love is to forgive. And so if you're carrying a hurt today, I understand. If our church has let you down, I sincerely apologize. As hard as we try, we don't always get it right. And in the same way that I've been forgiven, I want to forgive others. And my prayer is that you would find healing. Shake the dirt off and find joy as the holy spirit fills you. So Father we ask today, for you to do what only you can do. For miraculous healing from heaven. As you pray today, I really don't want anybody looking around right now. And I am not gonna hard. I'm not gonna push you on this. I'm just gonna give you a chance for those of you that have a hurt. It may not even be like a church hurt. It may be a family wound. It may be someone that lied to you. Someone that betrayed you, it could be in your marriage. It could be that your kids aren't respecting. It could be a family member. It could be a parent that's no longer alive, that hurts. You could be you we're abused when you are a child. You're carrying a wound right now and you may not be ready to shake it off, and you may not even be ready in this moment to forgive. And you don't even think you can heal, but you wanna reach out to God and ask him to help. If that's you today, just reach out to and ask him to help. Would you lift up your hands right now? Just lift up your hands. You can type it in the chat. Help me heal if you want. Father, there are so many today and God, I know it grieves you when your children hurt. And so we just look to you, we look to you and we ask God that you would do a work by the power of your holy spirit. Bring healing in our hearts. God, I would believe there would be some that even by faith in this moment can say, I choose to let it go, I choose to forgive. And God I know there are others that it would be. This would be a step in the process of healing, but we take that step, we take that step toward you. In the same way God you've forgiven us, give us the power to heal. Give us the power to display your grace, your forgiveness. And the world would look on and say, oh my gosh, they love so well, they love so well. They love like Jesus loves. God for those who've been hurt, I ask in the name of Jesus, that today would be a significant moment toward healing in their lives. We believe you're here, we believe you're here. The cries of our heart, you'll bring healing. As you keep praying today, there are those of you that, you're not right with God. There's some of you like me, you grew up in the church and claimed Jesus, but you are not following him right now. There are many one day who would stand before him and say, Lord, Lord, didn't we go to church, didn't we do good things. And he'll say, I didn't know you. There are those of you, you've claimed it. People think you're a Christian, but you're not. And today is the day of your salvation. Others of you, you look like you're far from God, you've messed up. Let me tell you who, who Jesus came for. He came for people like you. For people like me. He came for broken people. He came for sinful people. He was without sin, he became sin on the cross. He died in our place and God raised him from the dead so that anyone and this includes you, no matter how broken you are, no matter how far from God you are. Anyone who calls on Jesus, should be forgiven. You'd be healed. He has zero tolerance for hypocrisy, but he has unlimited grace for a sinner in need of forgiveness. Wherever you're watching from, those who say, I need his grace, I want his forgiveness, I step away from my sin, I step toward Jesus by faith, I give my life to him. That's your prayer. Lift your hands high right now. All over the place, lifting up right here. Praise God for you. If I hear others of you today saying yes, both of you right over here, I'll come on somebody. Let's give God some praise today. Others of you saying yes, Jesus, Jesus. Those of you online just type it in the chat. I'm giving my life to Jesus and wherever you're watching from today, would you just pray aloud? Pray, heavenly father.

- [Congregation] Heavenly father.
- Forgive me.
- [Congregation] Forgive me.
- For my sins.
- [Congregation] For my sins.
- Save me.
- [Congregation] Save me.
- By your grace.
- [Congregation] By your grace.
- Thank you Jesus.
- [Congregation] Thank you Jesus.
- For your perfect work.
- [Congregation] For your perfect work.
- Fill me with your spirit.
- [Congregation] Fill me with your spirit.
- So I could know you and show your love. My life is not my own. I give it all to you. Thank you for new life. Now you have mine in Jesus name, I pray. Somebody better give God praise right now for new life in Christ.